

OBJECT ACTION

EUR-6

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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ATTENTION

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM : AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

DATE: 6 October 1962

SUBJECT : Moscow University Students Meet on the Cuba Question

REF :

On the afternoon of October 25, a meeting was held at Moscow State University to condemn United States' action in placing a quarantine upon Cuba. The meeting, held under Komsomol auspices, was attended by one of the American exchange participants, presently studying at LGU. He has given an Embassy officer the following brief report of this gathering:

Upon receiving the "call" from the Komsomol, students from the University gathered in one of the main lecture halls to hear statements lambasting U.S. action vis-a-vis Cuba. The meeting proceeded in a thoroughly routine fashion, with little enthusiasm generated by any but one speaker. The one exception was reserved for a Cuban student, whose attacks on the United States were the only ones to be met with anything more than polite, even bored, applause. His oration was followed by an uninspired statement by a University professor, who seemed more concerned about finishing his talk than the substance of what he had to say -- this gentleman constantly looked at his watch while reading his prepared words, and appeared quite relieved when his role in the gathering was over, enabling him to leave the platform.

The American present said that at no time did any speaker even hint at the idea of Soviet ships fighting their way through the quarantine imposed by American vessels. Also, no real effort was made to refute the evidence of the offensive build-up taking place in Cuba, as outlined in President Kennedy's speech of October 22. Given the rather hollow nature of the attacks on the United States, the American observer noted that it was not at all surprising that the meeting ended on a rather unfinished note, with students filing out of the lecture room in a most disinterested fashion. No talk arose of marching on the American Embassy to carry the protest further.

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J. McSweeney

(In an interesting sidelight to this meeting, another American exchange participant, also studying at MGU, was told by a Komsomol leader that all the meetings being held around the country to condemn U.S. action were really quite silly. "How," he said "could people vote on condemnatory resolutions when they did not even know what President Kennedy/s had said." "The proper way to remedy this defect," he added, "would be to have the full text of the President's speech printed alongside the Soviet Government statement and then let the meetings hold their vote." This young man, for one, apparently does not understand the logic of the totalitarian method of thought control.)

For the Ambassador:



Eugene S. Staples
Counselor for Cultural Affairs